

## Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00

USIE-00 INRE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02 NSC-05 PA-01

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FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0515

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 BUENOS AIRES 2154

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ASEC, ELAB, PINT, AR

SUBJECT: FREJULI SENATOR ASSESSES ANTI-LOPEZ REGA MOVEMENT

REF: A) BA-2029, B) BA-1958, C) BA-1966, AND D) BA-2006

1. SUMMARY: SENIOR FREJULI SENATOR HAS TOLD EMBASSY THAT LABOR, BACKED BY OTHER FORCES, HAS DEFINITELY LAUNCHED CONCERTED EFFORT TO CONVINCE MRS. PERON TO GET RID OF LOPEZ REGA. OTHERS MAY BE CAUGHT UP IN THE CROSSFIRE AND ALSO MEET THEIR POLITICAL DEMISE. IT IS POSSIBLE, HOWEVER, THAT LABOR WILL RETREAT AND WAIT FOR ANOTHER OPPORTUNITY SHOULD IT ENCOUNTER FLAT REFUSAL ON PART OF MRS. PERON. END SUMMARY.

2. SENIOR FREJULI SENATOR TOLD EMBOFF EVENING OF MARCH 25 THAT EFFORTS TO OUST LOPEZ REGA WERE WELL ADVANCED AND HAD, IN ADDITION TO LABOR, THE SUPPORT OF MILITARY CINCS, CERTAIN KEY CABINET OFFICIALS AND BROAD SPECTRUMS OF PERONIST AND NON-PERONIST POLITICIANS. LORENZO MIGUEL AND ORGANIZED LABOR, GIVEN THEIR POLITICAL CLOUT, HAD BEEN SELECTED AS MOST EFFECTIVE GROUP TO PUBLICLY FORCE ISSUE. IN PRIVATE MEETING WITH MRS. PERON EXPECTED EARLY NEXT WEEK, MIGUEL WILL BE IN POSITION TO CITE SUPPORT OF OTHER GROUPS, ESPECIALLY THE MILITARY IN ORDER TO UNDERLINE TO HER THE DEPTH OF ANTI-LOPEZ REGA SENTIMENT.

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3. ACCORDING TO SENATOR, LOPEZ REGA'S POWER TO CONTROL

ACCESS TO THE PRESIDENT AND HIS GROWING CONTROL OF GOVT APPARATUS HAD REACHED INTOLERABLE LEVEL FORCING HIS OPPONENTS TO REACH DECISION TO CONFRONT MRS. PERON. HE EMPHASIZED FACT THAT ALL ELEMENTS OF ANTI-LOPEZ REGA MOVEMENT WANTED MRS. PERON TO STAY ON AS PRESIDENT.

4. SENATOR STATED BELIEF THAT WITH LOPEZ REGA REMOVED FROM SCENE, THE POLITICAL DIALOGUE AMONG THE PARTIES WOULD BE REESTABLISHED AND THE CONSENSUS STYLE THEY HAD LABORED SO LONG TO ACHIEVE COULD BE MAINTAINED. FURTHER, THE PERONIST ELEMENTS LOPEZ REGA HAD DRIVEN FROM THE PERONIST MOVEMENT COULD THEN RETURN TO THE FOLD AND THE LABOR-POLITICAL PERONIST SPLIT COULD BE HEALED. IN LATTER CASE, RAUL LASTIRI, PRESIDENT OF CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES WHO HAS OPPOSED LARGER ROLE FOR LABOR WING IN CONGRESS, WOULD LOSE HIS LEADERSHIP POSITION.

5. EMBOFF ASKED IF CONSIDERATION HAD BEEN GIVEN TO POSSIBILITY MRS. PERON WOULD NOT AGREE TO REMAIN AS PRESIDENT IF LOPEZ REGA DRIVEN OUT. SENATOR AGREED THIS WOULD POSE SERIOUS DIFFICULTIES BUT SAID HE, FOR ONE, WAS SURE SHE WOULD STAY IN OFFICE. AS HE PUT IT, LOPEZ REGA, THROUGH HIS "DEMONIC" INFLUENCE OVER HER, HAS KEPT THE PRESIDENT IN A STATE OF CONSTANT EMOTIONAL TURMOIL. WITH LOPEZ REGA GONE SHE WILL LEAD FAR MORE TRANQUIL EXISTENCE.

6. ACCORDING TO SENATOR, PLANNING FOR LOPEZ REGA'S REMOVAL HAS GONE ON FOR SOME TIME. FIFTEEN DAYS AGO MOVEMENT GATHERED MOMENTUM WHEN MIN. OF DEFENSE SAVINO A LOPEZ REGISTA, DECIDED TO THROW IN WITH ANTI-REGISTA FACTION. (COMMENT: TIMING GIVEN BY SENATOR COINCIDES WITH SHARP, THINLY VEILED ATTACKS AGAINST LOPEZ REGA AND FULSOME PRIASE FOR MILITARY WHICH FIRST APPEARED IN MARCH 18 ISSUE OF LORENZO MIGUEL-CONTROLLED MAGAZINE AND CONTINUES IN THIS WEEK'S ISSUE.) WEEK OF MARCH 18 INTERIOR MINISTER ROCAMORA, HIMSELF AN OPPONENT OF LOPEZ REGA, REALIZED EXTENT OF ANTI-REGA MOVEMENT AND ANNOUNCED DISCOVERY OF "VAST SUBVERSIVE PLOT" AND MOVED

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AGAINST CLASSIST UNIONS BOTH AS MEANS OF CURRYING FAVOR WITH MIGUEL AND INSURING HIS POSITION ON WINNING SIDE. SENATOR OPINED, HOWEVER, THAT ROCAMORA EFFORT HAD PROBABLY FAILED. LABOR DID NOT NEED HIS BACKING AGAINST LOPEZ REGA, AND HIS HELP AGAINST CLASSISTS WAS NOT ALL THAT HELPFUL TO THE ORTHODOX UNIONISTS ANYWAY. ACCORDING TO SENATOR, EVENTS HAVE NOW PASSED ROCAMORA BY, WHICH, HE SAID, DID NOT NECESSARILY MEAN ROCAMORA

WOULD NOT REMAIN AS MINISTER OF INTERIOR.

7. WITH LABOR MEETING WHICH WAS TO PRODUCE "SECRET" DOCUMENT CALLING FOR LOPEZ REGA'S OUSTER SET FOR MARCH 24, RAUL LASTIRI HAD SEVERAL MEETINGS WITH MIGUEL, THE LAST ONLY HOURS BEFORE LABOR ISSUED CRITICAL DOCUMENTS. THIS GAVE IMPRESSION LASTIRI WAS SEEKING SOME AGREEMENT WITH MIGUEL. ACCORDING TO SENATOR, THE LAST MEETING PRODUCED SHARP AND BITTER EXCHANGE AND SCENERIO NOW CALLS FOR LASTIRI TO FOLLOW LOPEZ REGA INTO POLITICAL LIMBO.

8. NEXT STEP IN PROCESS, ACCORDING TO SENATOR, WILL BE FOR LORENZO MIGUEL TO CALL ON MRS. PERON. ACCORDING TO SOURCE, THIS ENCOUNTER IS EXPECTED TO TAKE PLACE MARCH 31 OR APRIL 1. WHILE MRS. PERON IS NOT EXPECTED TO ACCEDE IMMEDIATELY TO DEMANDS OF ANTI-LOPEZ REGA FORCES, LATTER WANT ISSUE TO BE RESOLVED BEFORE APRIL 13 ELECTIONS IN MISSIONES. IF THIS DATE SLIPS, AND LOPEZ REGA IS EXPECTED TO MANEUVER DESPERATELY IN NEXT FEW DAYS, FREJULI WILL SEEK TO BLAME EXPECTED NARROW MARGIN OF VICTORY ON PERSONAL UNPOPULARITY OF LOPEZ REGA.

9. BECAUSE DURING NEXT FEW DAYS FOCUS OF POLITICAL EFFORTS WILL BE DIRECTED AGAINST LOPEZ REGA, SCHEDULED MEETING BETWEEN MRS. PERON AND FREJULI LEADERSHIP, NOW SLATED FOR FIRST WEEK IN APRIL WILL BE POSTPONED. FOLLOWING HOPED-FOR REMOVAL OF LOPEZ REGA, MEETING WILL BE RESCHEDULED ALLOWING SUFFICIENT TIME TO RESTRUCTURE FREJULI LEADERSHIP--I.E. GIVING LABOR LARGER VOICE IN CONGRESSIONAL AFFAIRS AND SELECTING REPLACEMENT FOR LASTIRI. (NOTE: IN CONVERSATION MARCH 25 WITH EMBOFF, JORGE CAMUS, SEC GEN OF PERONIST PARTY, STATED THAT JUSTICIALISTA PARTY WILL BE RE-  
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STRUCTURED IN "NEXT 15 DAYS". ON SAME DATE, A WELL CONNECTED PERONIST SOURCE CLOSE TO LASTIRI TOLD EMBOFF THAT SIGNS WERE POINTING TO EMINENT LASTIRI DOWNFALL ALONG WITH LOPEZ REGA, ALTHOUGH FORMER WAS NOW POLITICAL OPPONENT OF LATTER.)

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10. SENATOR CONCLUDED BY STRESSING VIEW THAT MOVES HAD NO FOREIGN POLICY IMPLICATIONS. HOWEVER, HE ADDED, THAT BECAUSE FONMIN VIGNES HAD IN RECENT WEEKS COME TO RELY ON LOPEZ REGA FOR POLITICAL SUPPORT, HE COULD BE REPLACED IIN CABINET SHUFFLE FOLLOWING LOPEZ REGA'S REMOVAL. HE ADDED THAT JUSTICE MINISTER BENITEZ WOULD BE MOST LIKELY REPLACEMENT FOR VIGNES.

11. COMMENT. THE ABOVE REPRESENTS SENATOR'S VIEW OF DEVELOPING SITUATION. IN GENERAL TERMS, IT FITS WITH WHAT WE ARE BEING TOLD BY OTHER SOURCES. SOME OF ABOVE MAY REFLECT MORE HOW SENATOR HOPES SITUATION DEVELOPS THAN HOW IT IS IN FACT DEVELOPING. HE MIGHT, FOR EXAMPLE, LIKE TO SEE LASTIRI AND VIGNES OUT, BUT AT THIS POINT WE HAVE NO HARD EVIDENCE TO INDICATE POSITIONS OF THESE TWO ARE SO WEAK AS TO SUGGEST THEY ARE, IN FACT, ON WAY OUT. FURTHER, HE INDICATES MRS. PERON'S REFUSAL TO ACCEDE TO DEMANDS TO OUST LOPEZ REGA WOULD RAISE "SERIOUS PROBLEMS" BUT DOES NOT ELABORATE FURTHER. MANY OTHERS BELIEVE LABOR WILL BACK DOWN IF IT MEETS WITH HER FLAT REFUSAL--I.E. TENSIONS WOULD BE INCREASED AND LINES MORE SHARPLY DRAWN, BUT LOPEZ REGA'S OUSTER MIGHT BE PUT OFF FOR YET A WHILE.

12. GENERAL THRUST OF THE POLITICAL MANEUVERING IS NOW BECOMING CLEAR, BUT TIMING, OUTCOME, HOW THE  
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SIDES LINE UP, AND, IN SOME CASES, EVEN MOTIVES, ARE STILL OBSCURE. IF SCENE APPEARS KAFKESQUE FROM DEPARTMENT, IT IS NO LESS SO FROM EMBASSY'S VANTAGE POINT. WE CAN ONLY APOLOGIZE FOR SITUATION'S

BIZARRE TOUCH WHILE AT SAME TIME CONTINUING TO  
OBSERVE IT CLOSELY.  
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## Message Attributes

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